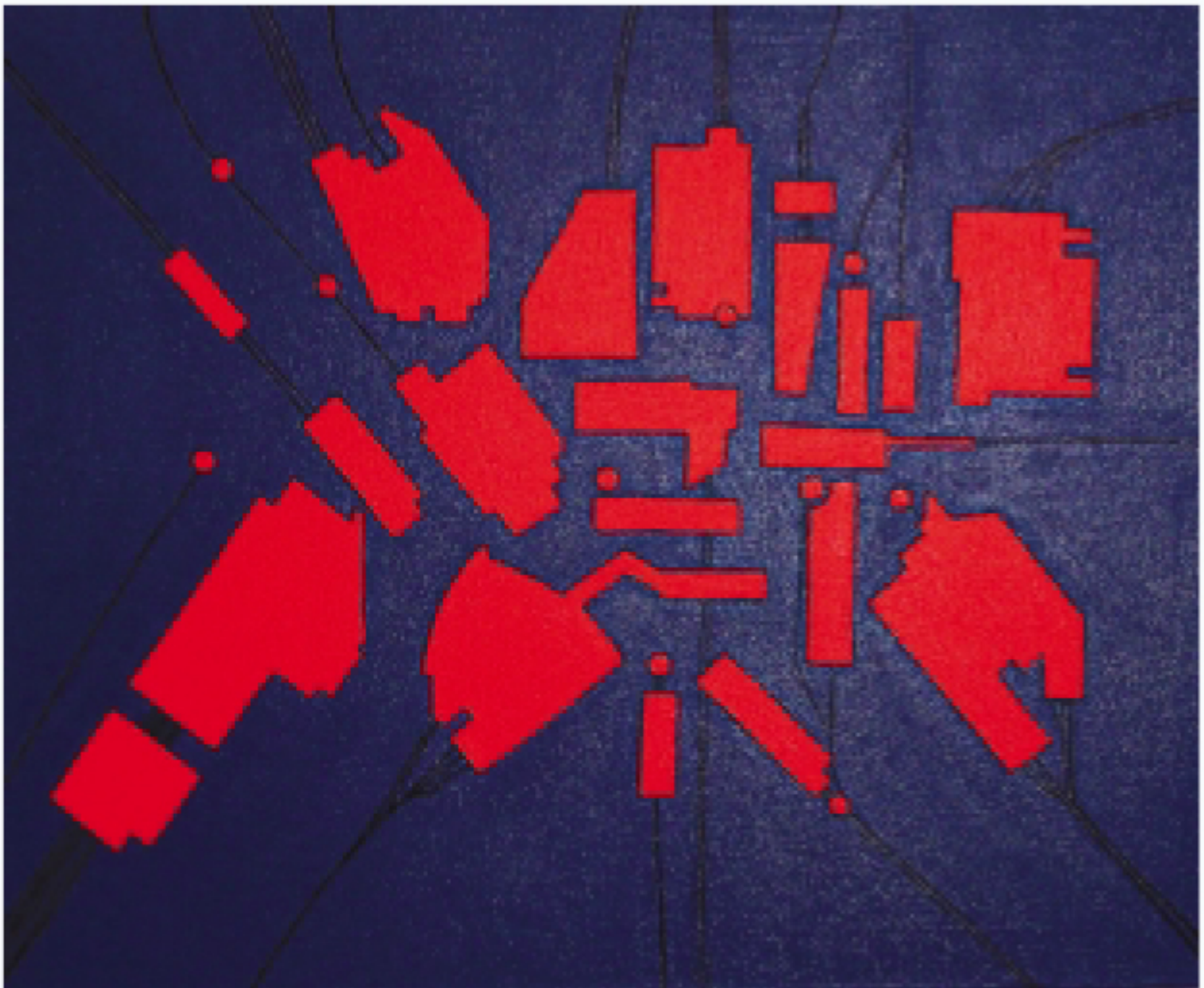


This transformation of something neither neutral nor exotic into a contested site of new meanings is reflected in Edita Marelic's *Frightened Stations Gathered Together for Mutual Support* (2003).²¹ This work subverts the notion of train stations as a self-confident symbol of modernity into sites of alienation, fear, and loneliness. By displacing and focusing on the stations (rather than the routes they serve) Marelic reminds us how they increasingly contain individuals whose lives are characterised by displacement and dispossession rather than by the optimism and vigour of their nineteenth-century designers. Nonetheless, there is something playful about the piece which reminds me of the comment made by Breda Beban, artist and curator from former Yugoslavia, about the 'Imaginary Balkans' exhibition (which she curated). 'Most of the work in the exhibition is about tracking down a sense of joy', she reflected, 'but this is the kind of joy informed by sadness, a complex kind of joy'.²²



Edita Marelic, *Frightened Stations Gathered Together for Mutual Support*, 2003, acrylic on canvas, 50 × 40 cm, 'Leave to Remain', exhibition, London, June 2003, photograph Adam Nieman